

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #31

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 19 for a 36-hour period. An aerial survey of the Bering River District was conducted last Sunday under generally poor conditions. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown today.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 19 for a 36-hour period. **Fishing time may be further reduced for Thursday's opening of the Copper River District if aerial surveys indices are below anticipated in today's aerial survey.** The cumulative sonar count to date is 1,193,159 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to date is 603,350 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 48-hour period that closed on Saturday, July 14 is 37,800 sockeye salmon with 159 deliveries reported. This compares to an anticipated harvest 41,900 sockeye salmon for this period. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on July 7 was 37%. For the week ending July 14, the Western Copper River Delta survey count was 16,300 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 10,700 sockeye salmon. During this survey observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were poor. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown today.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 19 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 23. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60° 20.00' N., 147° 26.59' W. to 60° 14.75' N., 147° 35.35' W. to 60° 02.50' N., 147° 44.41' W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest for the period that closed on Sunday, July 15 was 23,300 chum salmon with 27 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding Bettles Bay Subdistrict, excluding waters south of a latitude line at 60° 46.10' N., will open to commercial **drift gillnet** harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 19. **Waters of the WNH SHA will be closed north of a latitude line at 60° 47.69' N.** Anadromous stream closures within the WNH THA will not be in effect during this fishing period. Effective from 8:00 am, Thursday, July 19 to 8:00 am, Friday, July 20, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide. **An additional 24-hour period is anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Friday, July 20, with area to be determined.**

A total of 0 sockeye salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday due to ASL sampling. Cumulative passage to date is 50,727 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated goal of 15,932 fish. Preliminary estimates of commercial harvest from the 84-hour period that closed on Sunday, July 15 are 327,700 chum, 23,300 sockeye, and 34,900 pink salmon with 803 deliveries reported. Cumulative CPF harvest estimates to date are 1.82 million chum, 387,800 sockeye, and 52,400 pink salmon. PWSAC's WNH SHA chum salmon estimates for July 18 is as follows: 75,000 to 100,000 outside the barrier net; 100,000 to 120,000 inside the barrier net; and 8,000 to 9,000 fish in the brood holding pond. As of July 18, PWSAC reported approximately 109,000 chum salmon utilized in the broodstock egg collection process. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District **within the Main Bay Subdistrict and MBH THA and SHA, excluding the AGZ,** will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 19. Time is being reduced to limit the harvest of wild salmon migrating through the district, while still providing harvest opportunity on remaining MBH sockeye salmon run entry. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 17 was 1,700 chum, 20,200 sockeye, and 8,600 pink salmon with 169 deliveries reported. ADF&G otolith contribution estimates are now available for the Eshamy District commercial fishing period that ended on July 10. Preliminary estimates result in a harvest composition of 19% hatchery and 81% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest estimate of approximately 9,600 fish. Of the estimated 2,200 hatchery pink salmon harvested for this period, 100% originated from VFDA's Solomon Gulch Hatchery.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 19. No harvest was reported from the 24-hour fishing period that closed on Tuesday, July 17.

SEINE FISHERIES: Aerial surveys of the Eastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern and Southeastern districts were flown on Monday and Tuesday. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon escapement in these districts are behind anticipated numbers and therefore do not support a wild stock fishery at this time. VFDA completed cost recovery fishing on Wednesday, July 11. **During a survey today, VFDA estimated approximately 200,000 pink salmon secured for broodstock near the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, and another 300,000 to 400,000 fish behind closed waters at the head of the Port.** VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon.

The CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Tuesday, July 17 is 1 king, 70 sockeye, 495,000 pink and 220 chum salmon with 159 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Entrance Point on July 17 resulted in an estimate of 57% female. Cumulative pink salmon harvest in the Eastern District through July 17 is approximately 973,800 fish for cost recovery and approximately 5.9 million fish for common property fisheries.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters in the Eastern District, north of a line from 61° 02.855'N., 146° 44.204'W. to 61° 02.373'N., 146° 43.407'W. to 61° 02.992'N., 146° 39.165'W., will open to commercial fishing for 14 hours on Thursday, July 19 beginning at 6:00 am.

The following waters will be closed to commercial fishing during this period:

- **waters in Port Valdez east of a line from 61° 05.00' N. lat., 146° 21.50' W. long. to 61° 06.00' N. lat., 146° 21.50' W. long. and south of a line from 61° 06.00' N. lat., 146° 21.50' W. long. to 61° 06.00' N. lat., 146° 15.10' W. long.,**
- waters in Port Valdez north of a line from 61° 07.45'N. lat., 146° 23.75'W. long. to 61° 07.45'N. lat., 146° 29.80'W. long. (the Mineral Creek Delta, Gold Creek and Kadis Creek regulatory closed waters, as described in 5AAC 24.350(3)(N)),
- all waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor,
- waters within 200 yards of the AMHS Valdez Ferry Terminal when the ferry is arriving and departing.

All remaining regulatory closed waters north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **WILL NOT BE IN EFFECT** for this fishing period.

Area at the head of Port Valdez is being expanded for this fishing period at VFDA's recommendation to allow for the harvest of surplus to the Solomon Gulch Hatchery's broodstock needs. Area in Valdez Arm is being restricted to allow for wild chum salmon escapement in Galena, Sawmill and Jack bays. Based on wild chum salmon indicators in Valdez Arm and elsewhere in Prince William Sound, it is not expected that additional area will be provided for fishing openings targeting VFDA pink salmon.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 19. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. No harvest was reported for the 84-hour fishing period that ended on Sunday, July 15.

The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of the newly defined THA line from 60° 03.66' N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.77' N. lat., 148° 01.00' W. long. to 60° 02.76' N. lat., 148° 01.66' W. long. **will open to commercial fishing for 14 hour periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Thursday, July 19, Friday, July 20, and Saturday, July 21.** Daily 14-hour fishing periods are being implemented to better track daily chum and pink salmon harvests. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, July 15 is 4,700 sockeye, 1 coho, 3,200 pink and 8,200 chum salmon with 9 deliveries reported. No new ADF&G otolith contribution estimates are available for recent Southwestern District commercial fishing periods at this time.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Thursday, July 19. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Thursday, July 19.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.